

RECORD NUMBER OF GYPSY MOTHS CAUGHT IN IOWA

DES MOINES - A record numbers of 624 male gypsy moths were caught in Iowa traps in 2008, easily surpassing the 175 male gypsy moths caught in 2007. The previous Iowa record of 371 was set in 1998.

Gypsy moth is one of the most notorious defoliating pests of the eastern hardwoods. The larvae of this insect will feed on the leaves of more than 300 tree species during the summer, removing the trees ability to photosynthesize new "food." Repeated defoliation that occurs several years in a row can lead to the decline and potential death of the tree.

This has been a record catch year in neighboring states as well. Minnesota trapped three times the number of gypsy moths as its previous record. Wisconsin is reporting higher numbers of trapped male moths in counties just across the Mississippi River from Iowa's Allamakee and Clayton counties.

Gypsy moth has established itself in eastern Wisconsin, and is beginning to move towards northeast Iowa. Through Iowa's statewide trapping program and follow up treatments, gypsy moth has been kept from becoming established in Iowa. However, there are now five counties (Allamakee, Clayton, Dubuque, Jackson and Clinton) within 60 miles of the current gypsy moth establishment boundary line.

Gypsy moth is a European insect introduced into New England more than 100 years ago. Originally, gypsy moth larvae were brought to the United States to help provide silk for the textile industry since the native silk spinning caterpillars were susceptible to diseases. Overtime, this exotic insect escaped and continues to spread west from the original introduction site in Medford, Mass.

The Iowa Department of Agriculture, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's - Plant Protection and Quarantine program and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Forestry Bureau, will be discussing the 2009 trapping season and will be working with the Gypsy Moth Slow the Spread Foundation to determine future management options. It is important to note, that gypsy moth is not considered to be established in the state of Iowa.

Visit www.iowadnr.gov and select the Forestry tab for more information on Gypsy Moths, future updates on Gypsy Moth, and other forest related pests.

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